

# Spring Turkey Hunter Questionnaire 2001

by Jessica Kitchell

## **Abstract**

Approximately 90% of all spring turkey hunters that received a harvest permit hunted turkeys during the 2001 spring turkey season. The overall success rate for active hunters was 36.2%. The mean number of Jakes seen by hunters was 4.6 compared to a mean number of hens of 7.3. Approximately 76% of respondents indicated they would like to see the number of hunting permits for their zone to stay the same or decrease. Nearly 43% of the respondents indicated that turkey numbers in their hunting zones remained about the same relative to 2000. Statewide, the overall satisfaction level with the spring turkey hunt was 7.4 on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

## **Methods**

A sample of hunter names and addresses were randomly drawn from the current spring turkey hunter permit file. A survey was mailed to 10,000 spring turkey hunters after the completion of the spring turkey season. The questionnaire was mailed in proportion to the number of permits distributed in each zone. The questionnaire asked each hunter specific questions about their spring turkey hunting experience (Figure 1). A second mailing was made to 5,000 of the non-respondents. Data from all returned questionnaires were summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

The current spring turkey hunting zones were then grouped into regional areas (Figure 2). The regions were created from zones that had similar turkey populations, hunter densities, and habitat. These regions were created so that responses could be pooled to increase the response rates in some of the less hunted zones.

## **Results**

A total of 5,323 spring turkey hunter surveys were returned. The corrected response rate was 53.2%. Just over fourteen percent (14.2%) of the respondents, applied with landowner preference for this spring's turkey hunt permit (Table 1, Question 1).

Statewide, 90.1% of the respondents hunted turkeys during the spring of 2001. Of those who did not hunt, 45.0% bought a 2001 wild turkey stamp (Table 1, Question 2). The success rate for active hunters who received a harvest permit was 36.2%. This success rate may be high because hunters who were successful may have been more likely to return the survey than hunters who were unsuccessful. The spring turkey harvest registration data success rate (26.0%) is uncorrected for nonhunters and is probably a low estimate. 29.0% of the respondents had attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the WDNR or the National Wild Turkey Federation (Table 1, Question 4).

Surveyed hunters were asked how difficult it was to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2001, and 86.1% of the respondents said it was 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' (Table 1, Question 5). Spring turkey hunters were asked to report the days on which they hunted for turkeys during the 2001 season. Hunting pressure was relatively constant; with more pressure on Friday and Saturday of the hunting season (Table 1, Question 6). Statewide, the average number of days spent hunting for spring turkeys was 3.1.

Statewide, the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes seen by hunters was 4.6; the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes heard by hunters was 8.2; the mean # of Hens seen was 7.3, and the mean # of Hens heard was 5.4 (Table 1, Question 7). Approximately fifty-seven percent (57.3%) of the respondents did not shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity; 83.6% were waiting for a better shot or for an adult gobbler (Table 1, Question 8). Surveyed hunters were asked if they hit any turkeys that they were unable to retrieve: 5.3% were unable to find their bird. Hunters reported hitting up to three birds (Table 1, Question 9). Of the successful hunters, 1,679 harvested 1 turkey, and 58 harvested 2 turkeys. Nearly eighty-four percent (83.6%) of successful hunters harvested their turkeys between sunrise and noon (Table 1, Question 10).

Most respondents (90.7%) hunted on private land or a combination of private and public lands (Table 1, Question 11). Under one quarter (22.7%) responded to "other hunters kept me from hunting where I wanted to" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' Similarly, 18.4% of respondents answered "there was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' However, only 14.8% of the respondents indicated that other hunters interfered with their chance to bag a bird (Table 1, Question 12).

Overall, 40.4% of respondents rated their spring turkey hunting experience as 'very high' or 'fairly high,' while 20.2% rated their hunt as 'fairly low' or 'very low' (Table 1, Question 14). The most important factor that influenced respondents' perceptions of a quality hunt during 2001 was "seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling". The least important factors were "killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)" and "weather" (Table 1, Question 15).

Most respondents (42.6%) feel that turkey numbers in the zones they hunted in the spring stayed the same relative to the year before (Table 1, Question 16). Most respondents (76.1%) would like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) they hunted 'stay the same' or 'decrease' (Table 1, Question 17).

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst; statewide they ranked their satisfaction level at 7.4 (Table 1, Question 18).

**Table 1. Responses to the 2001 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire.***C= Central Region EC =East Central Region NE = North Eastern Region**NW= North Western Region SE =South Eastern Region SW =South Western Region*

1. Did you apply with landowner preference for this spring's turkey permit? (Percent)

|     | C    | EC   | NE   | NW | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-----|------|------|------|----|------|------|-------|
| Yes | 11.4 | 11.5 | 19.2 | 19 | 17.3 | 11.2 | 14.2  |
| No  | 88.6 | 88.5 | 80.8 | 81 | 82.7 | 88.9 | 85.8  |

2. Did you hunt turkeys this spring? (Percent)

|     | C  | EC   | NE   | NW | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-----|----|------|------|----|------|------|-------|
| Yes | 91 | 88.5 | 91.8 | 92 | 89.3 | 89.4 | 90.1  |
| No  | 9  | 11.5 | 8.2  | 8  | 10.7 | 10.6 | 9.9   |

- If no, did you buy a 2001 wild turkey stamp? (Percent)

|     | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Yes | 33.3 | 52.6 | 55.6 | 31.3 | 54.8 | 43.0 | 45.0  |
| No  | 66.7 | 47.4 | 44.4 | 68.8 | 45.2 | 57.0 | 55.0  |

3. Please list the zone and time period your carcass tag(s) were valid for this spring? (Percent)

4. Have you ever attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the Wisconsin DNR or the National Wild Turkey? (Percent)

|     | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Yes | 27.4 | 29.2 | 20.3 | 23.5 | 27.7 | 35.3 | 29.0  |
| No  | 72.6 | 70.8 | 79.7 | 76.5 | 72.3 | 64.7 | 71.0  |

5. How difficult was it for you to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2001? (Percent)

|                    | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Very Easy          | 50   | 57.7 | 50.7 | 54.2 | 44.6 | 53.3 | 52.5  |
| Somewhat Easy      | 37.7 | 28.2 | 33.6 | 33.4 | 38.1 | 33.5 | 33.6  |
| Somewhat Difficult | 11.2 | 12.8 | 14.7 | 10.7 | 16.4 | 11.4 | 12.4  |
| Very Difficult     | 1.2  | 1.4  | 7.7  | 1.7  | 1    | 1.8  | 1.5   |

6. Please check all the days that you hunted for turkeys this spring. (Percent)

|           | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Wednesday | 19.8 | 20.4 | 21.6 | 21.0 | 23.1 | 19.8 | 20.7  |
| Thursday  | 20.9 | 20.0 | 20.4 | 20.6 | 19.2 | 19.0 | 19.8  |
| Friday    | 23.5 | 22.2 | 22.2 | 22.9 | 20.1 | 22.4 | 22.3  |
| Saturday  | 21.8 | 22.4 | 20.9 | 21.7 | 21.9 | 23.3 | 22.3  |
| Sunday    | 14.0 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 13.8 | 15.7 | 15.5 | 14.9  |

7. Please fill in the number of turkeys you saw or heard while actively hunting. (Mean)

|                      | C   | EC  | NE  | NW   | SE  | SW  | Total |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-------|
| Gobblers/Jakes seen  | 3.9 | 4.3 | 4.7 | 5.6  | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.6   |
| Gobblers/Jakes heard | 7.7 | 7.5 | 8.0 | 10.2 | 5.8 | 8.5 | 8.2   |
| Hens Seen            | 6.6 | 6.8 | 8.2 | 8.5  | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.3   |
| Hens Heard           | 4.7 | 5.0 | 5.6 | 7.5  | 4.5 | 4.9 | 5.4   |

8. Did you shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity? (Percent)

|     | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Yes | 46.1 | 39.3 | 39.8 | 39.6 | 44.2 | 45.0 | 42.7  |
| No  | 53.9 | 60.7 | 60.3 | 60.4 | 55.8 | 55.0 | 57.3  |

- If no, please tell us which of the following was the reason. (Percent)

|                              | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Waiting for a better shot    | 55.1 | 48.7 | 54.7 | 53.1 | 47.8 | 47.9 | 50.5  |
| Waiting for an adult gobbler | 28.7 | 36.5 | 27.9 | 31.2 | 37.5 | 34.4 | 33.1  |
| Waiting for a larger bird    | 6.5  | 7.4  | 11.7 | 8.9  | 9.5  | 9.6  | 9.1   |
| Wanted to hunt longer        | 9.7  | 7.4  | 5.7  | 6.9  | 5.2  | 8.2  | 7.3   |
| Other                        | 34.6 | 34.9 | 30.5 | 26.8 | 35.4 | 32.3 | 32.1  |

9. Did you hit a turkey you were unable to retrieve? (Percent)

|     | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Yes | 5.4  | 4.5  | 7.2  | 4.3  | 5.1  | 5.4  | 5.3   |
| No  | 94.6 | 95.5 | 92.8 | 95.7 | 94.9 | 94.6 | 94.7  |

- If yes, how many? (Frequency)

| Number of Turkeys | C  | EC | NE | NW | SE | SW | Total |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| 1                 | 21 | 27 | 35 | 29 | 24 | 72 | 208   |
| 2                 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 3  | 0  | 3  | 6     |
| 3                 | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1     |

10. How many turkeys did you harvest this spring? (Frequency)

| Number of Turkeys | C   | EC  | NE  | NW  | SE  | SW  | Total |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 1                 | 174 | 220 | 215 | 320 | 191 | 559 | 1679  |
| 2                 | 5   | 8   | 1   | 5   | 2   | 37  | 58    |

▪ What time did you harvest your turkey(s)? (Percent)

|             | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Sunrise-9am | 71.7 | 63.3 | 63.6 | 62.3 | 71.0 | 61.3 | 64.1  |
| 9am-Noon    | 12.8 | 23.1 | 15.4 | 22.4 | 16.1 | 20.8 | 19.5  |
| Noon-3pm    | 9.4  | 9.8  | 10.8 | 9.8  | 7.8  | 11.3 | 10.2  |
| 3pm-5pm     | 6.1  | 3.9  | 10.3 | 5.5  | 5.2  | 6.6  | 6.3   |

11. Did you hunt on: (Percent)

|              | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Public Land  | 34.2 | 9.9  | 10.6 | 5.1  | 7.8  | 4.2  | 9.3   |
| Private Land | 37.2 | 73.8 | 72.5 | 85.8 | 77.3 | 88.8 | 77.8  |
| Both         | 28.6 | 16.2 | 16.9 | 9.1  | 14.9 | 7.0  | 12.9  |

12. Other hunters may have affected your turkey hunt. For each statement below, please check the response which best reflects your 2001 spring hunt. (Percent)

▪ Other hunters sometimes kept me from hunting where I wanted to.

|                | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Definitely Yes | 12.4 | 10.4 | 6.9  | 9.9  | 9.4  | 9.4  | 9.6   |
| Somewhat       | 14.7 | 9.8  | 14.3 | 12.3 | 13.3 | 13.9 | 13.1  |
| Not Much       | 19.4 | 15.0 | 16.3 | 15.6 | 17.3 | 15.2 | 16.0  |
| No, Not At All | 53.5 | 64.8 | 62.5 | 62.3 | 60.0 | 61.6 | 61.3  |

▪ There was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted.

|                | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Definitely Yes | 4.5  | 5.3  | 3.8  | 3.7  | 5.1  | 4.5  | 4.5   |
| Somewhat       | 16.0 | 13.5 | 14.7 | 14.1 | 14.5 | 12.9 | 13.9  |
| Not Much       | 28.5 | 19.9 | 24.5 | 21.7 | 22.1 | 21.8 | 22.5  |
| No, Not At All | 50.9 | 61.3 | 57.0 | 60.6 | 58.4 | 60.9 | 59.2  |

- Other hunters interfered with my chance to bag a bird.

|                | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Definitely Yes | 6.1  | 7.1  | 5.6  | 5.1  | 5.1  | 5.7  | 5.7   |
| Somewhat       | 10.1 | 8.2  | 9.8  | 8.1  | 12.3 | 8.2  | 9.1   |
| Not Much       | 17.9 | 15.1 | 16.1 | 12.9 | 13.5 | 15.2 | 14.9  |
| No, Not At All | 65.8 | 69.6 | 68.5 | 74.0 | 69.2 | 71.0 | 70.3  |

13. How many turkeys do you know of that were shot by people this spring and were:

- Tagged but not registered

| Number of Turkeys | C | EC | NE | NW | SE | SW | Total |
|-------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| 1                 | 4 | 2  | 2  | 5  | 5  | 8  | 26    |
| 2                 | 0 | 0  | 4  | 10 | 1  | 6  | 21    |
| 3                 | 1 | 0  | 4  | 4  | 1  | 5  | 15    |
| 4                 | 1 | 2  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 11    |
| > 4               | 1 | 2  | 1  | 4  | 3  | 5  | 16    |

- Not tagged or registered

| Number of Turkeys | C | EC | NE | NW | SE | SW | Total |
|-------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| 1                 | 7 | 7  | 11 | 10 | 8  | 20 | 63    |
| 2                 | 3 | 3  | 4  | 5  | 4  | 8  | 27    |
| 3                 | 2 | 2  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 10    |
| 4                 | 1 | 3  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 10    |
| > 4               | 4 | 0  | 1  | 5  | 1  | 0  | 11    |

14. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your spring 2001 Wisconsin wild turkey hunt this year? (Percent)

|             | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Very High   | 14.9 | 17.4 | 21.4 | 23.8 | 17.7 | 20.6 | 19.9  |
| Fairly High | 22.5 | 18.9 | 20.2 | 22.2 | 23.7 | 18.9 | 20.5  |
| Average     | 40.4 | 37.2 | 40.7 | 39.0 | 38.3 | 40.3 | 39.5  |
| Fairly Low  | 13.9 | 18.3 | 10.9 | 10.4 | 15.0 | 14.3 | 13.8  |
| Very Low    | 8.4  | 8.3  | 6.8  | 4.6  | 5.3  | 5.9  | 6.4   |

15. Rate the factors that most influence your perception of a “quality” spring turkey hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with “1” having the most effect and “7” having the least effect on your hunting experience. (Mean)

|                                                  | C   | EC  | NE  | NW  | SE  | SW  | Total |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| An Opportunity to kill a turkey                  | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.1   |
| Seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling | 2.2 | 2.1 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1   |
| Killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)      | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 4.3   |
| Killing a mature Tom                             | 3.9 | 3.9 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.9 | 3.8   |
| Weather                                          | 4.1 | 4.6 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.3   |
| Not seeing other hunters                         | 4.2 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 3.9 | 3.9   |
| Spending time with friends and family            | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.5   |

16. Do you feel that the turkey numbers have changed from last year in the zones(s) you hunted this spring? (percent)

|                        | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Increased              | 18.7 | 13.5 | 31.5 | 23.7 | 16.6 | 14.1 | 18.4  |
| Stay the same          | 43.5 | 38.0 | 37.8 | 44.4 | 44.0 | 44.4 | 42.6  |
| Decreased              | 28.3 | 40.7 | 18.0 | 21.9 | 30.2 | 34.3 | 30.2  |
| Did not hunt same zone | 9.6  | 7.8  | 12.7 | 10.0 | 9.3  | 7.3  | 8.9   |

17. Would you like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) you hunted changed? (Percent)

|               | C    | EC   | NE   | NW   | SE   | SW   | Total |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Increased     | 26.9 | 22.3 | 34.9 | 30.8 | 21.7 | 17.5 | 23.9  |
| Stay the same | 67.3 | 71.7 | 59.8 | 67.4 | 73.0 | 76.9 | 71.1  |
| Decreased     | 5.8  | 6.1  | 5.3  | 1.8  | 5.3  | 5.6  | 5.0   |

18. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst, how would you rate the quality of the DNR's turkey management program? (Mean)

|        | C   | EC  | NE  | NW  | SE  | SW  | Total |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Rating | 7.4 | 7.4 | 7.3 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.4   |

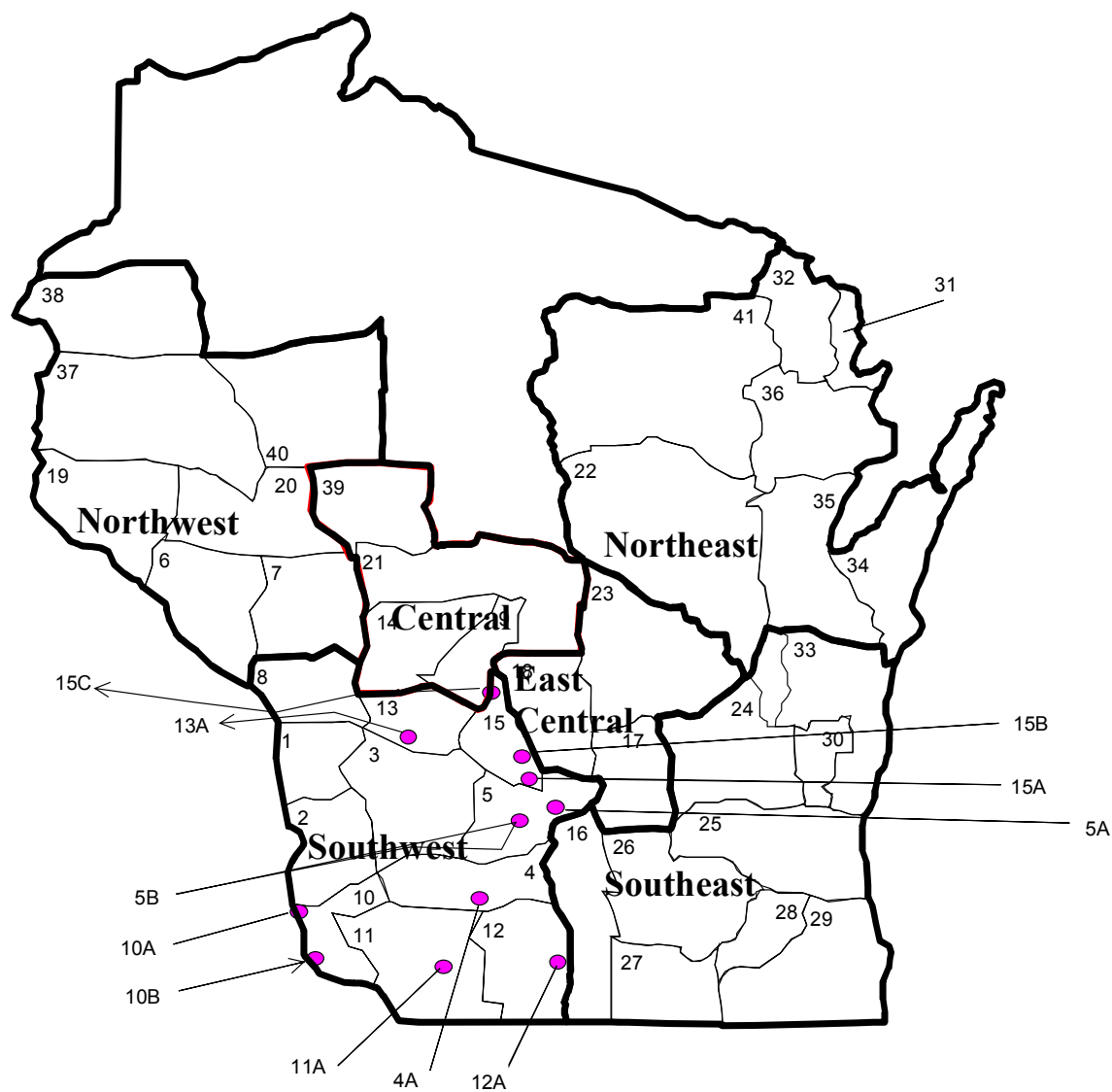
**Figure 1.** *2001 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire.*

Hard copies of the questionnaire available upon request from:

Brian Dhuey  
1350 Femrite Dr.  
Monona, WI 53716



**Figure 1.** *Continued.*



**Figure 2.** Turkey Regions.